

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mr. Brian Johnson on 21 October 2008.

The application has been amended as follows:

Claim 2 has been cancelled, the status identifier of claim 2 has been changed to --(Cancelled)--, and all of the text of claim 2 has been deleted.

In claim 1, the following recitation has been inserted between lines 29 and 30, immediately after line 29, starting in a new line:

--the reinforcing unit further comprising a stop means having a stepped shape, the stop means extending along at least a portion of one edge of the pair of opposing circumferential edges of the reinforcing unit; and--.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

Concerning the prior art of Turner et al (U.S. 3,487,856), Tetzlaff (U.S. 2,341,828), Dominguez (U.S. 5,010,626), Vogel et al (U.S. 2003/0052236), and Turner

et al view of Vogel et al, see remarks, pages 7-13, in the Applicant's reply filed 10/10/2008.

Concerning the prior art of Wagner (U.S. 6,116,659), it would be improper hindsight to add the structural feature of "a stop means having a stepped shape, the stop means extending along at least a portion of one edge of the pair of opposing circumferential edges of the reinforcing unit" as recited in instant claim 1, immediately following line 29, to the "reinforcing unit" of Wagner, since the prior art of record neither teaches nor suggests adding the structural feature of a "stop means" as recited in instant claim 1.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to JAY R. RIPLEY whose telephone number is (571)272-7535. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday, 1:30 P.M. - 10:00 P.M.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Daniel P. Stodola can be reached on 571-272-7087. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Jay R Ripley/
Examiner, Art Unit 3679
21 October 2008

/James M Hewitt/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3679